



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind Demands that USDA Explain Plans for New Milk Tax

USDA Document Reveals Political Strategy to Impose Milk Tax After the Election

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) sent a letter today to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Ann Veneman, demanding to know if the USDA plans to impose a new milk tax on dairy farmers after the November elections, as indicated in a USDA document that discusses how to ‘maximize votes from major dairy states.’ The document, which was presented to the American Dairy Products Institute (ADPI) on April 20, 2004, suggests that a new milk tax and a cut in dairy price support, is under consideration by the Bush administration.

“As a member of Congress representing one of America’s largest dairy districts, I am shocked by the implication that the USDA is formulating dairy policies based on gross political considerations rather than based on the interests of farmers and consumers,” Kind stated in the letter.

The document, bearing the USDA logo, contains cartoon image of boxing elephants and donkey and characters dropping votes in ballot boxes. Within the pages one headline reads ‘Election Year Fallout’ and indicates that the federal budget deficit will be ‘addressed after the election’ with an ‘increased likelihood of [Milk Income Loss Contract] (MILC) termination’ and a ‘small producer assessment/support price decline.’

“In addition to the staggering legal and ethical implications of your agency using federal resources for campaign purposes, I am also extremely troubled by the USDA’s apparent plans to “maximize votes from major dairy states” by maintaining “supportive policy actions” - while preparing to impose a new milk tax on hardworking dairy farmers and/or cut milk price supports following the Presidential election,” stated Kind.

In the letter, Rep. Kind requests a meeting with Secretary Veneman. Letter Attached.